

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10 and 13 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Tupper (US Pat. No. 4,846,074). Claims 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Tupper (US Pat. No. 4,846,074) in view of Renton et al. (US Pat. No. 6,530,454).

Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's analysis of the claims as the cited prior art fails to teach or suggest important features of the present invention as originally claimed. However, in order to advance prosecution, Applicant has amended the claims to more particularly define the present invention over the cited prior art. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of the present invention as originally claimed in one or more continuation applications.

Claim 1 as amended recites, *inter alia*,

"... the first and second link means each being connected to a respective one of the first and second cam elements for rotation about a **respective second axis separated from the corresponding first axis by a fixed offset defined by the respective cam element ...;**

in which each of **the first and second link means comprises two parts arranged for reversible relative movement in response to an applied load from the attaching means** above a predetermined value, **the movement being such that a part of**

the link means intermediate said second and third axes descends relative to said second axis. Such an arrangement is not taught or suggested by the cited prior art.

FIGS. 9 and 10 of Tupper illustrates a device that employs locking cam members 64,65 each actuated by a corresponding two-part linkage (straight link 72 pivotally connected to cranked link 74 for the left side - straight link 73 pivotally connected to cranked link 75 for the right side). The cranked links 73, 75 descend from respective pivoting axes that are not fixed in position. Instead, the pivoting axes of the cranked links 73, 75 translate in respective slots 76, 77 formed in the side plates 62. In contrast, the present invention of amended claim 1 requires "**first and second link means** that are connected to corresponding first and second cam elements **for rotation about a respective second axis separated from the corresponding first axis by a fixed offset defined by the respective cam element,**" wherein the first and second link means comprises two parts arranged for reversible relative movement, **the movement being such that a part of the link means intermediate said second and third axes descends relative to the "fixed" second axis.** As described above, the cranked links 73, 75 of Tupper descend from respective sliding non-fixed pivoting axes that are different from the fixed position second axes of the claim. Thus, the arrangement of Tupper operates in a significantly different manner than the device of amended claim 1.

The teachings of Renton et al. do not remedy the shortcomings of Tupper.

Thus, the cited prior art fails to teach or suggest important features of amended claim 1. For these reasons, amended claim 1 is clearly patentable over the cited prior art.

The dependent claims 2-15 are patentable over the cited prior art for those reasons advanced above with respect to claim 1 from which they respectively depend and for reciting additional features that are not taught or suggested by the cited prior art.

For example, amended claim 8 recites that "the first and cam elements and first and second link means form a quadrilateral linkage defined by the first axis, the second axis for the first link means, the second axis for the second link means, and third axis, wherein the device can be configured in a first configuration and a second configuration." In the first configuration, "the first and second cam elements are in the first locking position and the first and third axes of the quadrilateral linkage are offset from one another by a first distance." In the second configuration, "the first and second cam elements are in the second released position and the first and third axes of the quadrilateral linkage are offset from one another by a second distance." Importantly, the second distance is less than the first distance. This arrangement is significantly different than device of Tupper in which the corresponding pivoting axes are positioned nearer to one another in the locked configuration (FIG. 10) as compared to the released configuration (FIG. 9), and thus is configured opposite to that of the limitations of claim 8.

New independent claim 17 recites the features of claim 8 and thus is patentable over the cited prior art for the reasons advanced above with respect to claim 8. New dependent claims 18-26 are patentable over the cited prior art for those reasons advanced above with respect to claim 17 from which they respectively depend and for reciting additional features that are not taught or suggested by the cited prior art.

In light of all of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in order for allowance, and prompt allowance is earnestly requested. Should any issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney of record so that the case may proceed expeditiously to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

/ Jay P. Sbrollini /

Jay P. Sbrollini
Reg. No. 36,266
Attorney for Applicant(s)

GORDON & JACOBSON, P.C.
60 Long Ridge Road
Suite 407
Stamford, CT 06902
Ph:(203) 323-1800

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